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CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM ★ LUCHE POR EL COMUNISMO ★ PLP

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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Los Angeles Teachers

STRIKE!





LOS ANGELES, January 9—Thousands of education workers are preparing for a strike! Progressive Labor Party is preparing to bring communist solidarity to the picket lines. These strikes can be schools for class-conscious ideas and practices. As CHALLENGE goes to press, the United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) union has postponed the strike from tomorrow to Monday because of "uncertainty over whether a judge could order the union to wait" (Los Angeles Times, 1/9). The union was hoping for a negotiated settlement, making the legal jockeying and courtroom glitches irrelevant.

While the union, courts, and the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) battles out its paperwork, it's in every worker's interest to go on strike! The workers want higher pay, smaller class sizes, and more nurses, counselors, and librarians to create fully staffed schools (LA Times, 1/9). They also want more of a say in how charter schools share campuses, a demand the UTLA has abandoned.

To prepare, 50,000 teachers, school workers, students, parents and community groups marched "to defend public education" in mid December. The march came after 18 months of failed contract negotiations for the teachers of LAUSD, the second largest school district in the country. Teachers are fed up with the working conditions they are facing and students are fed up with their learning conditions: overcrowded class sizes, lack of resources, unnecessary testing, public funds being siphoned into private charter companies, and low pay. Many believe a strike is imminent.

Student-worker unity

One student spoke, "Let me start by saying how angry I am with Superintendent Beutner. He hasn't done anything to reduce our overcrowded class sizes…He hasn't done anything to end the racist random search policy of taking me and my friends out of class to search us every day. Just to be clear, he takes kids out of class starting in the 6th grade to search them for weapons… He doesn't have any of our interests at heart…If you all have to go on strike for these issues, students will be with you!"When the students are on the side of workers, that level of unity cannot be underestimated.

Superintendent Beutner, a classic capitalist criminal. The Superintendent of LAUSD, Austin Beutner, is certainly a politician with ties to the charter school companies. He's been a donor to local charter schools and has touted their successes (LA Times 10/18/18). He's recently hired private consultants with shady backgrounds, such as the lobbying firm Mercury Public Affairs, which represented former Trump adviser (and convicted felon) Paul Manafort, helped Flint, Michigan spin its poisoned water crisis, and advised Walmart on anti-union campaigns (Reclaim Our Schools, LA 11/18/18).

Billionaire charter-school advocate Eli Broad was once a business associate of Austin Beutner and contributed $3 million dollars to LAUSD as a "vote of confidence" in him when he was hired. Their connection includes Broad's failed attempt to take over both the LA Times and the San Diego Union-Tribune in 2016, after which Beutner was let go as publisher and CEO of both newspapers (San Diego Reader, 2/16/18).

Main problem: racist learning conditions

The main problem in the schools remains the

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JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

OUR FIGHT

✰Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

✰The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

✰Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

✰While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

✰Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

✰Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

✰Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

✰Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✰Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

✰Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

U.S. in Syria

Liberal terrorists and the next war

Declaring "victory" against ISIS, U.S. President Donald Trump recently and suddenly announced the withdrawal of all 2,200 U.S. troops from Syria and half of the 14,000 in Afghanistan. In reality, U.S. imperialism is losing ground to Russian imperialism in Syria, and also opening the door to regional enemy Iran and its client Shiite militias there (foreignaffairs.com, 1/8). Pronounced splits among the U.S. bosses are sharpening as their empire crumbles.

Meanwhile, the outraged opposition to Trump's planned pullout among fake leftist and liberal Democratic Party politicians has exposed them as dedicated servants of finance capital, the main wing of the U.S. ruling class, which is led by the likes of ExxonMobil, JP-Morgan Chase, and Citigroup.

This main capitalist wing's commitment to perpetual—and genocidal—war in the Middle East and South Asia is strategically opposed by a more domestically oriented, "Fortress America" wing, led by the Koch, Mercer, and Adelson families. The main wing, with trillions of dollars and an empire at stake in the oil and gas fields of the Middle East, favors keeping a small military presence there while regrouping the U.S. military for the bigger war looming with China and Russia. The domestic wing would prefer to disinvest in land forces and rely on mass-murdering airstrikes to defend their narrower sphere of interest.

Finance capital still has the upper hand. Nearly three weeks after Trump's "astonishing reversal of U.S. policy" (foreignaffairs.com, 1/8), John Bolton, the national security advisor, effectively overruled his boss by "laying out conditions for a pullout that could leave American forces there for months or even years" (New York Times, 1/6). Bolton got his start in the 1980s with the U.S. Agency for International Development, an acknowledged CIA front (NYT, 4/15/14). Though he has ties to right-wingers in the domestic wing, and like Trump distrusts Europe and multilateral alliances, he was a prominent interventionist in the two main-wing Bush administrations.

The international revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party is the only party that represents the interests of the international working class. PLP is the workers' only hope to smash this rotten, criminal, capitalist system. As long as the profit system exists, oil will be indispensable to imperialist warfare. Oil will continue to make the Middle East a killing field. From the 12 million refugees driven from their homes in Syria, to the slaughterhouse of Yemen, where the U.S. has helped the Saudi royal thugs starve nearly a hundred thousand children to death (NYT, 11/21/18), the necessity of building this movement is more urgent than ever.

Middle East, South Asia still crucial to U.S. imperialists

Since the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, U.S.-instigated wars have killed over a million people (NYT, 4/13/2018). This doesn't include previous U.S. conflicts in the region, or the 500,000 children in Iraq murdered by Democrat Bill Clinton's genocidal sanctions and bombings in the 1990s.

By 2008, as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan became bloody stalemates, the economic crisis in the U.S. constrained U.S. imperialism. The Russian bosses' expanded naval presence in the eastern Mediterranean, anchored by their base at the Syrian port of Tartus, prompted the U.S. under Democrat Barack Obama to ramp up covert funding of "pro-democracy" groups. In 2011, when the U.S. capitalist-financed Arab Spring led to mass demonstrations, the U.S. was ready to exploit the unrest. CIA-connected members of Syria's military formed the so-called Free Syrian Army (International Business Times, 6/26/15).

Obama ordered the CIA directly into Syria in 2013, supported by U.S. bombs. Russian proxies Iran and Hezbollah entered in 2015, backed by Russian bombs (Al Jazeera, 4/14/18). Both imperialist powers have backed proxy wars for profit under the guise of "fighting terrorism" and ISIS. Yet as brutal and backwards as the ISIS terrorists are, they can't hold a candle to the big terrorists U.S. and Russian imperialists.

Trump announced U.S. troop withdrawal would hand Russia's rulers a big victory. Whether Trump follows through or not, it's certain the U.S. bosses will continue slaughtering workers to maintain some level of control over the region's vast oil fields and strategic location.

Fake left hypocrisy

The main-wing capitalists' mouthpiece, the New York Times, has provided daily roll calls of outraged Democrats slamming Trump's push to withdraw. Its editorial board has repeatedly voiced concern for "protecting the nation," slamming Trump for "ceding a strategically vital country to Iran and Russia" and "a gift to Vladimir Putin" (NYT, 12/19/18 and 12/27/18).

The Democrats are at present the main wing's most reliable servants and defenders of U.S. imperialism. From 2016 to 2018, as the minority party in the House of Representatives, they voted two-to-one to give the military even more money than Trump requested (Forbes, 6/20/18). Echoing the U.S. rulers' talking points, the Democrats' self-styled "resistance heroine," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, attacked Trump's withdrawal as "premature" and promised Congressional review of the decision "to ensure that the president's decisions advance our national security interests" (Independent, 12/20/18).

Pro-Wall Street Pelosi, the most powerful Democrat in Congress, has never seen a war she didn't like. She has supported every U.S. military action since her election in 1987, and secretly supported torture after September 11, 2001 (NYT, 5/14/09; CNN, 11/25/09).

Meanwhile, the silence has been deafening from the newly-elected "democratic socialist" members of Congress, like Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar, and Rashida Tlaib. All three kissed the ring of arch-imperialist Pelosi, voting for her return as House Speaker.

Many workers are hoping for working class leadership to emerge from some of these newly elected politicians. But betting on any of these misleaders as a "lesser evil" than the gutter racist, sexist Trump would be a lethal mistake.

U.S. imperialism needs more fascism

As erratic and undisciplined as Trump is, he has successfully consolidated a white supremacist base around the domestic capitalist wing. When his surprise withdrawal announcement was followed by more high-profile resignations, including that of main-wing stalwart Jim Mattis, the Secretary of Defense, it signaled that the fighting between these two factions is intensifying on the road to fascism.

For workers in the U.S., fascism will mean even lower living standards and heightened racist, sexist, and nationalist attacks to pay for World War III. Richard Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations, the main wing's most prominent think tank, predicted that the next major U.S. war would begin in Iran: "Syria could see increased fighting…[possibly] Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey….Things, when they happen in the Middle East, have a way of spreading around the world" (MSNBC, 12/27/18).

Smash imperialism with communism

As the world's bosses plot for war to protect their treasure, PLP offers another solution to the international working class: communism. Workers, students and soldiers around the world have no interest in choosing one set of capitalist misleaders and terrorists over another.

We have every interest in building an international Red Army of millions to smash this racist, genocidal profit system and the racist borders the imperialists draw to keep us divided. Capitalism can offer only the miseries of fascism and imperialist war for our class. Communism means abolishing capitalism. With nothing to lose, and a whole world to gain: Will you join us?✪

Los Angeles ready to strike

Continued from page 1

racist learning conditions of students. Overcrowded classrooms and racist policies have plagued public education for generations. Getting rid of one superintendent, politician or CEO will not change that. Though a strike does not change the nature of capitalism, it builds our working-class muscles to smash this system and build a worker-run society.

Education under capitalism is determined by the needs of the ruling class. They also train the next generation of workers with a prison-like environment and work-like conditions: long hours, discipline, reprimanding, and a hierarchical structure.Only by changing the system itself can we create proper learning environments that serve the interests of the working class and our children.

Strike for workers' power

Strikes, however, can teach very useful lessons to our class. Strikes show the bosses and show us the power we have as a united working class. Strikes show us that the bosses need us, but we do not need the bosses. When the teachers of Los Angeles strike, they will join many courageous education workers throughout the country who have done the same in recent years. About five percent of all teachers in K-12 schools in the United States have walked off the job so far in 2018, the most since 1992. The stoppages include walkouts in Washington state, North Carolina, Arizona, Colorado, Oklahoma, West Virginia, and Kentucky (Washington Examiner 10/18/18). This is a sign of an upsurge in working class fight back throughout the country, not to mention similar fight backs throughout the world.

Strikes are the first step in the long battle for working class power and a system that truly meets our needs. However, they alone are not enough. We must eventually use the lessons we've learned about the strength of a united working class to overthrow this system.

Progressive Labor Party (PLP) believes that changing the system from capitalism to communism would give the working class control over their own lives. Under communism, decisions will be made collectively. There will be no bosses, politicians, or competition. There will be no racist or sexist exploitation. Join us on our long road to communism and learn how to make this happen! Join PLP!✪

I participated in the pre-strike rally

I marched in the 50,000 strong LAUSD rally with co-workers to protest the racism, enormous class sizes, after-school programs cut, and teacher and wage cuts. I am a substitute teacher preparing to mobilize parents, students, and teachers to fight back against the cut backs with public education.

With negotiations between the LAUSD and United Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA) continuing to break down, the capitalists wish is to impose more austerity on our schools. One way to do that is to simply hire more substitute teachers to fill in the gaps of regular full-time teachers. Despite having $2 billion in reserves, there is still a years-long teacher (LA Report School Report 12/4/2017) Full time K-12 teachers can get paid $40/hr, substitute teachers are paid $30/hr, and part-time teacher assistants are paid only $13/hr (Glassdoor.com) Substitute Teachers often have less pay, less hours, and subject to easier termination than the full-time teachers; a sub can work as little as 6 hours a week.

Recently the district has been sending in more subs in the Central and Southern Regions of Los Angeles (the regions where primarily Black and Latin workers live) often sending as many as 4-6 subs at a school a month; this trend has been spreading in districts outside LAUSD such as Inglewood and Compton. Non-permanent teachers lower the quality of education for students. They do not receive a consistent curriculum, are less motivated to participate in class because of the lack of a trusting relationship with the teacher.

I became a substitute teacher in the hopes of being able to teach fulltime in Black and Latin working-class communities to make a difference. However, these schools are hit hard with budget cuts. They have reassigned full-time workers as substitute teachers.

Talking with teachers made me realize about the struggles that we have as teachers as a whole. Standing together side by side, the masses of workers chanted in the 2nd Street tunnel. I wished we teachers would've chanted longer. There was no chant about multiracial unity.

After the march, I stayed for some of the speeches. UTLA President Alex-Caputo Pearl endorsed liberal LA councilmember Jackie Goldberg to try to deal with the chaos of the pro-Charter LAUSD Board of Education Ref Rodriguez. This is an attempt to channel the teachers' militancy into support for "better" administrators. Whether or not Goldberg can keep the schools public or flip it later into private charters, it is our duty as teachers, paraprofessionals, nurses, teacher assistants, and subs to stand shoulder to shoulder. We must fight against the starvation of the working-class children's education and turn this strike into a school of communism.✪

The wildcat underground: Workers & students defy school bosses and union

OAKLAND, CA—At least 75 out of 90 teachers, students, and community members defied both the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) and the Oakland Education Association (OEA) union.

Oakland High School workers and students led the charge, demanding high wages, smaller class sizes, and more student services (The Hill, 12/11).

They are fed up after years of stalled negotiations and shenanigans between OUSD and OEA. They called themselves the "Wildcat Underground," wildcat being the name of the school mascot.

They held a rally in front of the campus to publicize the demands, and then marched to the school district headquarters in downtown Oakland, chanting loudly along the way. The administrators refused to come out to meet with them, or even make a comment.

After arriving at City Hall, where city leaders, including the liberal mayor Libby Schaaf, who hid in her office—actually closing her blinds—refused to address the fearless crowd. A group of students and staff went in to confront the city officials and were highly disappointed by their empty responses.

Progressive Labor Party salutes this working-class defiance of the bosses' laws. Education workers must put the needs of working-class students at the forefront of the struggle.

Illegality, for who

Outside, John Sasaki, director of communications for OUSD, awkwardly fielded questions from the crowd. He started by repeating the threat that this was an illegal, non-union sanctioned action and that teachers could be punished and lose a day's wages. Yes, the teachers' strike was not organized by the union at all.

Teachers quickly responded that OUSD illegally breaks contracts all the time with oversized class sizes and not enough seats.

Teachers also reminded him that years of lost wages due to increasing cost of living makes one day of threatened punishment seem like nothing.



He was ridiculed for being an overpaid goon for the district. Sasaki's transition from a local Fox affiliated reporter to communications director for a continually exploitaitive District shows you something about what capitalism rewards; people who tow the bosses' line over teachers who teach critical thinking and are prepared to disrupt the status quo.

Teaching our students by example

Teachers, students and community members told stories and sang before the whole group joined up again and concluded with a rally in front of the cowardly District office. One teacher spoke about the decision to leave the classroom: Teachers had not "abandoned" their students with this action; they were developing the curriculum that students needed to fight for a better future.

Shut it down

There was another amazing outcome of the wildcat walkout: at least two other high schools, Fremont High (in East Oakland) and Madison Park (6-12th grade) also caught wind and joined the action with Fremont sending at least two thirds of its 60 teachers. The loud chants could be heard as the Fremont High contingent joined us in front of City Hall. Community college teachers, who teach in the High School Programs, also joined. Personal-political connections between teachers at different schools helped make this happen.

Hopefully this unity will inspire community college teachers in the Peralta Federation of Teachers (PFT), especially part-time workers and students.

A multiracial fightback

Progressive Labor Party members who participated, observed that this multiracial, multigenerational, militant group reminded us of PL rallies over the years. It had the same outrage and refusal to be controlled by fear.

The ability to see through liberal politicians' lies and see that the union was unwilling or unresponsive was the big takeaway. To see rank-and-file workers take control and successfully organize the shutdown of three schools, despite the bosses' threats, shows a glimpse of what's possible.

When teachers and students fight for their common needs, we see the small steps that prelude building a more collective world where teaching conditions are students' learning conditions.

Many learned that despite fearing lack of preparedness, the working class was indeed ready to stand up and flex its collective muscle. Stay tuned.✪

Haiti

Soup of solidarity: PLP fights capitalism one meal at a time

HAITI, January 1—It is a tradition to eat pumpkin soup ("bwe soup joumou" in Creole) every January 1. This soup, sometimes called "Independence Soup," is a symbol of liberty for the Haitian masses because prior to January 1, 1804, enslaved people were forbidden to have soup. It has also become an occasion to show solidarity: you get up at four o'clock in the morning to prepare the pumpkin soup in the largest pot you can find. It is shared with all your family, neighbors and friends, who come by to have soup and share the news of the day.

But for a long time now, because of the impoverishment of the working class and the strengthening of the capitalist ideology of individualism, some families, especially the most vulnerable, can't afford the ingredients for the soup. Little by little, the feeling of liberty and solidarity that the practice represents is being lost.

It is in this context, that for the last three years, every January 1,Progressive Labor Party (PLP) has organized a "solidarity soup" in a small provincial town. Party members and friends raise money and families guarantee the cooking. When the soup is done and piping hot, we distribute the soup in our working class neighborhoods and on the public square, using the occasion to talk about what is really going on in Haiti and in the world, from a communist point of view. Hundreds of people share the soup—turning the social inequality created by the capitalist system on its head, if only for a little while, allowing our friends and neighbors to savor their traditional soup in dignity and respect.

More and more, the workers of this town understand the importance of class solidarity, which is essential for the struggle of workers against the class of exploiters, both domestic and international, which threaten their daily existence. In essence, there is no victory without unity and the communist concepts of sharing and collectivity among the oppressed workers of the world. We are all living the same reality, in differing degrees: if we want to win the class struggle we must unite, as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels remind us in *The Communist Manifesto*. There is no better way for our class to win than to build solidarity in all aspects of life.

In Haiti, 2018 was a year of intense mass struggle against a viciously corrupt system. While many politicians and bankers and bosses are complicit in the theft of funds in the PetroCaribe affair, they are all guilty because they all defend the interests of their class against the working class. Workers have no friends in this den of thieves. But the struggle was mostly spontaneous, with workers, students and youth pouring out into the streets by the thousands over and over to demand an end to capitalist corruption. Many were killed and injured by cops and their death squad agents. But it will take more than spontaneity to defeat the capitalist system, and that is what PLP in Haiti and around the world is organizing to do. Let 2019 be the beginning of the end of the dark night of global capitalism. Let us, the international working class, commit to becoming united into a single fist, to arming both ideologically and militarily, to carrying the red flag of communist revolution, to fighting for an egalitarian world, under the leadership of the PLP. Then we will truly be able to savor our pumpkin soup, knowing that we have changed the world.

Women's March falls short: Workers need multiracial unity

The Women's March, happening in a number of cities on January 19, 2019, began in 2017 when Donald Trump became President. It was in large part a response to his sexist behavior toward women, as well as the serious threats to women's access to abortion. Several million women and men marched in the U.S. and around the world.

The demands included reproductive rights, criminal justice reform, defense of the environment and supporting the rights of immigrants, Muslims, gay and transgender people, and the disabled. The march was consciously intended to prop up the Democratic Party, and many of its slogans implied that workers would have been better off had Hillary Clinton been elected. None of the leaders and few of the marchers connected the problems of racism and sexism to capitalism.



Communist slogans catch on at Women's March of 2017 in Washington, DC.

Electing Democrats, however, does nothing to address the crises of capitalism: economic disarray and inequality, the threat of climate change caused by the profitable burning of fossil fuels, and imperialist wars that threaten to become world wars. Women are often the biggest victims of these depredations, with tens of millions working in low-wage factories from Bangladesh to China to the U.S., and they have terribly suffered from imperialist wars in Yemen, Afghanistan, Syria and many other countries. Billions of women and men are exploited and oppressed by capitalism, which is why workers of all genders, nations and ethnicities should unite to fight for a society run by and for ourselves – communism. That will require a revolution, and to accomplish that we must stick together and avoid the false promises of liberal reformers, even if well-intentioned.

This year's March will push the same limited Democratic Party-endorsed set of reforms, and has also been marred by accusations of anti-Semitism against the leaders. Two of the four leaders have had some relationship with Louis Farrakhan, head of the Nation of Islam(NOI), who has a long history of perpetuationg racist and anti-Semitic, and anti-gay rhetoric. In February, at the NOI's annual Saviour's Day event, Farrakhan falsely accused Jewish people of being "the mother and father of apartheid" and offered his unique conspiracy theory that they had used marijuana to chemically induce homosexuality in Black men.

The NOI leader has repeatedly blamed racist conditions on bad behavior by Black fathers or providers, rather than on the ravages of racism. This was the theme of his famous Million Man March of 1995. Farrakhan has long been a right-winger, a proponent of Black capitalism and an enemy of Malcolm X, who he said was "worthy of death." When Malcolm X was assassinated by members of NOI in 1965 when he broke with Elijah Muhammed and began to advocate multi-racial unity, Malcolm's family accused Farrakhan of ordering the killing.One of the leaders of the Women's march, Tamika Mallory, is a businesswomen and Democratic Party operative. She is close to NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio and is the national director of the National Action Network, led by Hillary Clinton supporter and Democratic Party activist Al Sharpton. Mallory attended the February NOI event and had nothing but praise for Farrakhan.

Facing criticism, Mallory denied she supported anti-Semitism. Another leader of the Women's march, Linda Sarsour, has often spoken out against anti-Semitism while being an active supporter of Palestinian rights. Sarsour raised money to support the victims of anti-Semitic attacks, especially after the recent massacre at a Pittsburgh synagogue. Most of the people accusing her of anti-Semitism are doing so because Sarsour opposes the brutal apartheid policies of Israel. Rather than being concerned about fighting racism, her detractors defend Israel's mistreatment and murder of Palestinians. So bitter is this dispute that the Women's March has been cancelled in Chicago and several other locations, and two competing marches are scheduled in NYC.

Rather than calling for multiracial unity against a racist and sexist system perpetuated by the two big capitalist parties in the U.S., the leaders allow Democratic Party spokespeople a platform (presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren was a featured speaker for two years in a row). The Guiding Vision statement of the Women's March calls for some worthwhile reforms:"accountability and justice for police brutality and ending racial profiling, [dismantling] the gender and racial inequities within the criminal justice system,… an economy powered by transparency, accountability, security and equity,… and equal pay for equal work."

They also called for an end to "aggression caused by the war economy and the concentration of power in the hands of a wealthy elite who use political, social, and economic systems to safeguard and expand their power."

However, the only means discussed to accomplish these goals are a new Constitutional amendment, adherence to UN Human Rights Declarations and maintaining the right to unionize. Change, presumably, will come by electing Democrats. Such demands are pipedreams under capitalism. While some policies can conceal or shift the racist and sexist effects of capitalism, the system that produces these inequalities goes unchallenged.

Rather than separatist struggles, in which each oppressed group fights for its own rights under capitalism, we need a unified and fighting working class. Despite an apparatus for voting which allows for a periodic (and often manipulated) choice between various members of the ruling class, neither political party offers anything other than minor tinkering with a capitalist system that cares only about profits, and is in deep crisis and threatens to take us all down through war, depression and the destruction of the environment. It has got to go.✪

GM workers walk out; contract fight coming

NEW YORK CITY, December 23—When General Motors announced the closure of four U.S. and one Canadian auto plant late December, workers in Canada walked out! Almost 16,000 jobs were at stake. As capitalist corporations compete with each other to maximize their profits, workers suffer. Investors loved the cost-cutting news as GM stocks shot up by almost eight percent.

At the GM assembly plant in Oshawa, Canada, workers had a different response. They walked out and then blocked the gates to prevent supplies from getting in and finished cars from getting out. Auto workers from Canada, the U.S.,Mexico and worldwide will have to organize many more such actions to fight the auto bosses. They will get no help from politicians or even their own union 'leaders.' Canadian President Justin Trudeau tweeted "I spoke with GM (Chief Executive) Mary Barra to express my deep disappointment in the closure" (Reuters.com, Nov 26, 2018). President Trump said "he was 'not happy' with the decision and spoke 'very tough' to Barra about the moves" (Autonews.com, 12/23/2018). The union leaders also talked tough with no plans for action.



Workers fight back against General Motors's plan to shut down its Oshawa plant in Canada

Auto bosses get government bailout; workers get layoffs and low wages

The auto industry has had eight straight years of big profits thanks to the $60 billion Barack Obama bailout of 2009 and billions more from United Auto Workers (UAW) union concessions. But now comes the crisis of overproduction, a regular feature of capitalism and the auto industry in particular. The plants slated to close are all operating below full capacity. In the global cutthroat competition for markets, resources and cheap labor, the bosses ruthlessly pursue profits. At some point those factories not functioning at full capacity become a drain on those profits. In these closings, all five plants were operating on one shift. Entire shifts had already been laid off. And according to the Detroit Free Press, GM has four of 12 plants, Ford has three of nine plants, and Fiat Chrysler has two of six plants operating below capacity. More closings are likely.

This reflects yet another restructuring of the global auto industry. Sales have dropped in North America and China and the world's auto bosses have been losing money in Europe and South America. More than 1,000 Nissan workers are losing their jobs in Mexico and Ford could soon announce its own job-cutting plan, which could wipe out as many as 25,000 jobs.

Fight for more jobs, higher wages and communism

With the GM, Ford and Fiat Chrysler contracts set to expire in the U.S. and Canada in Sept. 2019, the bosses and the UAW leadership will use these cuts to divide workers and play them against each other.After the national contracts are resolved, each local plant negotiates its own local agreement. That is where the union and the company "whipsaw" the workers against each other into accepting labor agreements that boost corporate profits, each hoping that the most profitable arrangement will get more work assigned to that factory.

As we head toward the contract talks, let's follow the lead of the workers in Canada and make 2019 a year of militant fightback. Workers are already angry after a major corruption scandal involving UAW officials accepting bribes from Fiat Chrysler officials during the last contract negotiations. While UAW officials accepted tens of thousands of dollars in cash, gifts and trips, sell-out auto contracts opened the floodgates to lower paid, temporary and part-time workers in assembly plants. This, in an industry already flooded with low wage jobs in the supplier industries. Workers could decide to take matter into their own hands. Wildcat strikes could return.

As communists, members of the Progressive Labor Party will support any rebellion in the ranks against the bosses. At the same time we fight for a communist world where production is based on the needs of the international working class, not the profits of the war-making bosses and bankers.✪

Caravan forum builds international solidarity

NEW YORK CITY, January 3— A Progressive Labor Party (PLP) club rang in 2019 with a forum in New York City to raise awareness about the plight, of our longsuffering sisters and brothers fleeing Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, and who are now desperately seeking refuge at the Tijuana-U.S. border.

After an intense week of preparation, 35 workers attended. PLP panelists sharply contrasted the horrors refugee workers experience under capitalism, with that of a liberated worker-run society devoid of economic and physical violence, and artificial borders.

The discussions and experiences that we shared inspired workers to become more deeply involved in struggle to help our fellow migrant workers. The forum began with a panel talk that gave a historical and political overview of the current crisis. In his introduction, the PL'er spoke about how U.S. imperialism destroys the countries of Latin America socially and economically through U.S. interventions militarily and politically in these countries and also about how workers there led the resistance against the criminal U.S imperialism.

This panel was followed by a talk from a member of a community organization who was in Mexico with a group of volunteers. She spoke about her experiences with workers in the caravan, who she built relationships with, and she shared some of their stories. These stories gripped the audience and brought many of us to tears as she laid bare the harrowing conditions these families are experiencing. Many,she explained, are going hungry without food, clothing, or shelter, and many others suffer illnesses due to lack of medical attention and unhealthy conditions.

Nevertheless she counter-posed these with stories about the solidarity, and selflessness that workers from Mexico and the U.S are showing these families in their darkest hours. They lend a hand by donating food, supplies, and their time in order make worker's lives more bearable. These examples are bright spots of hope that remind us that only our class is truly capable of protecting, and caring for others in times of need.

Another young woman in the panel, working with the sanctuary movement, also told us about the work they are doing to help the members of the caravan in different ways, from fundraising to volunteering in order to meet worker needs. Finally a young worker concluded the panel by sharing her inspiring work in the sanctuary movement. She and her mother created a group to help immigrants who face deportations, which presently boasts 670 members.

After the presentation we opened up the panel for discussion and Q&A, and we had the opportunity to express some ideas and at the end we also had the pleasure of distributing CHALLENGEs. By the end of the discussion, we came to the general consensus that the workers were fleeing from violence, the corruption of governments, poverty, hunger, misery, lack of work, lack of opportunities and repression, and that the bosses—not workers—profit from borders. More importantly, we discussed ways to help our brothers and sisters who are already on the border, and several proposals were made. In the future we agreed to:

- Elaborate and present workshops in all the committees of the community organization about the caravan.
- Prepare a list of volunteers to go to the border in support of the migrants.
- Collect funds and supplies to help the members of the caravan and deliver it to the Sanctuary Movement.
- Carry out protests or action plans of the committee within the organization.
- Work with a PLP member who works at CUNY (who during the forum also participated and gave a speech about his anti-racist work at his campus).

Finally, we concluded with a fundraiser. We gave the funds to the Sanctuary Movement to contribute to the organizing efforts at the border. Perhaps the most valuable gain from this event was that it demonstrated the willingness of the workers to challenge the system and to fight for the things we really care about.

Although we are working inside a reformist organization run by the liberal rulers, this was a small victory for the members of PLP and our friends. We know that with this, we need to continue on the path of larger struggles for communist revolution and workers' power.✪

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

University students meet exploitation, with fighback

Warren Wilson College is a unique institution. It is one of eight members of the work college consortium, and the only college in the U.S. to integrate work, service, and academics into an undergraduate experience. However, there is widespread exploitation of student workers, especially during breaks. During the academic year students are paid the minimum wage in North Carolina, which is $7.25 for all positions despite a living wage in Asheville being more than double that amount.

Many students working around the farm are pressured to work overtime without pay, under the pretext that without their labor the livestock would suffer. All payment is issued to students in the form of tuition, so students must take on a second job in order to pay for everyday expenses in addition to a full course load. The limited cash contracts available on campus are all in food and beverage service which excludes many disabled students.

Over the summer, workers were placed in a building previously condemned for black mold, while still having rent deducted from their wages. We were paid only slightly higher wages on a six-week basis. This means that our first paycheck was issued a month and a half into the summer resulting in widespread food insecurity. Without access to the on-campus clinic over the summer, many workers were unable to get healthcare.

There have been whispers of unionizing for years, but in the 2018 fall semester a tipping point was reached. We were able to assemble a group of students committed to reforming the work program. During our first semester in operation we developed a survey documenting the abuse of summer workers and compiled a list of overall demands. Through a series of one-on-one and group meetings with university administration, we were able to negotiate great progress in the area of summer work including higher wages, safe living conditions, community counseling for meeting mental and physical health, and pay issued every two weeks instead of having to go over a month without any income. We were also able to reinstate a governing body directed by students to address issues of workers' rights on campus.



Looking forward, we plan to use this platform to continue to advocate for reforms such as a livable wages during the academic year, stipends available for working-class students, increased attention to workplace safety, and many other issues affecting the student workforce.

★★★★★

Auto workers support the caravan, build PLP

Since last November, our PLP collective has been active in building support for the Refugee Caravan that has brought thousands of asylum seekers and their families to the southern U.S. border. From the U.S government's part, the refugees have been met with tear gas, closed borders, barbed wire and U.S. troops supporting an already existing army of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents, Border Patrol and fascist militias.

On the other hand, thousands of workers and students are supporting the caravan, working through various mass organizations like Border Angels, COSECHA, New Sanctuary Caravan and many more. Our work is mainly in the United Auto Workers union (UAW), where we have been building a base for internationalism, anti-racism and PLP for years.

In New York City, the membership is largely made up of legal aid and legal service workers, adjunct professors, museum and campus workers, auto dealership mechanics, freelance writers, airport cleaners and print shop workers, and more recently grad student employees and others. Legal aid and service locals have organized walkouts and job actions to get ICE agents out of NY State courtrooms. Overall, it is a very integrated and international struggle led mostly by women. And for all of its positive aspects, it is totally consumed in electoral politics and the Democratic Party. That's the nature of contradictions.

Due to many fights and debates over the years, some won, some lost, when the Refugee Caravan and humanitarian crisis at the border erupted, we were in a relatively good position to offer some leadership. Currently support for the caravan has been discussed in numerous leadership bodies in our union. In addition a delegation of seven members is preparing to go to the border, with two already stationed there, and a call is going out for volunteers and donations to the roughly 30,000 workers in our region. The union is also committing thousands of dollars to support these efforts.

The caravan has created an opening to struggle with both old and new CHALLENGE readers, around the world, and has the potential to win workers to our ideas and build their leadership in this fight

★★★★★

Lessons from the Cultural Revolution

Meeting a real communist from China has given me a chance to deepen my understanding of revolution and counter-revolution. My friend was a factory worker in China during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) and, besides his lived experience, he has studied the events in his country that led up to the Cultural Revolution (CR) as well as the restoration of capitalism that happened after the CR ended.

A group of comrades in the U.S. has begun studying Chinese history in the period before the capitalist restoration using some of the insights from our new Chinese friend as well as analyses written by Progressive Labor Party at the time.

Corruption in the CCP

Our friend points out two pivotal developments in China in the mid-1950s, a decade before the Cultural Revolution. The first was the institution of the multi-level pay and perk scale for cadre. Cadre were people responsible for leading the day to day tasks of building the country, such as organizing factory or farming work. Not all cadre were members of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) when the party took power in 1949. Many were carried over from the bureaucracy of the old regime. Those cadre who were members of the CCP had lived for years on a supply system that provided very similar levels of essentials (food, clothing, lodging, etc.) to all cadre, regardless of their level of leadership. The old bureaucracy had a graduated wage scale with more responsible individuals paid more.

In 1955 the CCP reorganized the compensation system so that all cadre, party members and others, were placed into some level of the same 30-tier pay scale, according to their level of responsibility. This arrangement provided the material basis for cadre focusing on getting ahead by promotion rather than working collectively to build a revolutionary society. Our friend uses the term "bureaucratic privilege" to describe the system in which cadre's income and access to better housing, schools, etc. was determined by their rank. Articles in PL Magazine in the 1970s criticized this hierarchical system as part of the trend toward capitalist restoration ("revisionism").

End of rectification

A second development took place in May of 1957, described as a "flip" from the Rectification Campaign to the Anti-Rightist Campaign. (The Rectification Campaign that began in 1956 is known for its slogan "Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom, Let a Hundred Schools of Thought Contend"). Mao stated as late as May 14, 1957, that "Our Party will be destroyed without Rectification."

But the free criticism by Chinese intellectuals and others of features of life in China, including the leadership of the CCP, reached a high enough level of intensity by that time that the majority of the Politburo decided to change course abruptly. At Politburo meetings on May 14 and 16, the decision was made to stop the Rectification Campaign and launch the Anti-Rightist Campaign. Outspoken critics of the CCP were attacked, at times being removed from their posts and publicly denounced. Thus, people who criticized the CCP's policies were no longer considered part of "the people" but could be branded "enemies of the people" by the CCP leaders. This was, our friend points out, a serious mistake, confusing criticism of bureaucratic and managerial clumsiness with counter-revolutionary activity.

Individualist ideas overpowered pro-communist ideas

These two policy decisions of the 1950s created an environment in which constructive criticism of people's incorrect ideas to further the development of socialist society ("attack the disease to save the patient") was replaced by personal attacks and striving for personal power and influence. Combined with bureaucratic privilege, this further widened the growing chasm between the working class and the CCP leaders. Eventually, this led to an interest group of powerful managers who essentially became a new capitalist class inside the Party.

Our friend said life for workers during the Cultural Revolution was a temporary reversal of this trend. Factory workers or cadre of different levels did not risk their livelihood if they raised criticisms of those above them in management or in Party leadership. Maybe the reason that capitalists hate the Cultural Revolution so much is that they fear the very idea of workers being free to criticize them without being fired.

We feel that we have a lot to learn about this very complicated historical period, but having a friend with the personal experience of being a factory worker during the Cultural Revolution can make this study group richly rewarding.✪

Remembering Comrade Jerry Weinberg

Comrade Jerry Weinberg, one of the earlier editors of CHALLENGE, died on January 2 at the age of 79 after spending nine months in hospice care. Jerry was known for his withering sarcasm directed against all the agents of the ruling class, many examples of which showed up in the pages of CHALLENGE.

Jerry and his wife Ginger were attracted to Progressive Labor Party(PLP)when its predecessor, the Progressive Labor Movement, broke the U.S. ban on travel to Cuba. They later became active members of PLP. In the late 1960s, Jerry became the CHALLENGE editor and Ginger a columnist.

Jerry would devise headlines and front pages that exposed individual rulers and capitalism in general. One vivid example showed two pictures pasted together of Ted Kennedy seemingly kissing George Wallace, representing the ties that bound the liberal ruling class with racists and fascists like Wallace.

Jerry was not only a lover of jazz — which had its roots among Black workers — but pointed out the racist politics which enabled white musicians to appropriate this music. Being an atheist, he was particularly sharp on exposing how religion was used by the bosses to maintain their oppression of the working class.



Some years following his editorship of CHALLENGE, Jerry became an accomplished chef in New Jersey and would set up fund-raising dinners to raise money for PLP. Eventually Jerry's family moved to Burlington, Vermont, where he established the Five Spice Café, which for 25 years became one of the most popular eateries in the city. It was there that his working-class sensitivities evolved into training numbers of youth who worked in his kitchen to themselves become accomplished cooks. (One said that Jerry "deserved a plaque for his peanut sauce alone!") He was well-known in the area, donating to many worthy causes.

Jerry was a storyteller, a lover of poetry and taught about the necessity of living as if we have the obligation to do right by each other. He is survived by Ginger, their daughter Cheryl, and beloved grandsons Ethan Charles and Zander Reed.

Comrade Jerry's devotion to communism and the working class will be sorely missed, but the delicious meals he prepared will also be remembered by anyone who savored the food in the Five Spice Café.

(Anyone wishing to tangibly honor Jerry can donate to help get a new wheelchair for Jerry's hospice roommate Chris at Birchwood Terrace https://tinyurl.com/yagsjxqu) Chris and Jerry looked out for each other while rooming together, and Chris was a friend and guardian to Jerry as his health declined.) ✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

CIA organizes widespread killing of Afghans

NYT, 12/31 — Razo Khan woke up suddenly to the sight of assault rifles pointed at his face, and demands that he get up out of bed and onto the floor. Within minutes….the shooting started….

Mr. Khan…watched his home go up in flames. Within were the bodies of two of his brothers and of his sister-in-law Khanzri, who was shot three times in the head. Villagers…found the burned body of her 3-year-old daughter, Marina, in a corner of the bedroom.

The men who raided the family's home…were members of the Afghan strike force trained and overseen by the Central Intelligence Agency in a parallel mission in the United States military…. Mr. Khan and his family had done nothing to put themselves in the cross-hairs of the CIA-sponsored strike force….

It was clear that the raiding force had "committed an atrocity," said…a member of the Khost provincial council…."Everyone we spoke to said they would swear on the innocence of the victims…."

The…forces overseen by the CIA have….operated unconstrained by battlefield rules designed to protect civilians, conducting night raids, torture and killings with near impunity….

Those abuses are actively pushing people toward the Taliban….The two most…ruthless forces…are…sponsored mainly by the CIA.

Those fighting forces are recruited, trained and equipped by CIA agents….One…Afghan security official bluntly accused the strike forces of war crimes

Imperialists commemorate WWI & ignore slaughter of 1million African workers

NYT, 12/7—The…armies fighting in the trenches comprised more than Europeans alone. World War I was also fought by African, Asian, Caribbean and Polynesian troops….Even less acknowledged is the death toll of soldiers, laborers, and civilians on the African continent, whose fatalities probably exceeded one million….From Namibia to Morocco, Cameroon to Tanzania, Africans served, fought and succumbed to violence or disease — and when it was over, the powers signing the peace treaty in Versailles gave them nothing at all….

The large majority of Africans who died…in World War I were porters, or "carriers," forced to move cannons, machine guns, officers' gramophones and even ships across thousands of inhospitable miles, removing thousands of trees through the dense jungle….[including] the harrowing transport of British boats dragged overland from Cape Town all the way to Lake Tanganyika — contested by Britain, Belgium and Germany — by men who rarely survived the full trip….A European officer justifies his barbarity this way: "They are not men because they have no name. They are not soldiers because they have no number. You don't call them, you count them."

Yemen: An Obama-Trump Saudi Arabia war crime

NYT,12/26 — When a Saudi F-15 warplane takes off from…southern Saudi Arabia for a bombing run over Yemen, it is not just the plane and the bombs that are American.

American mechanics service the jet and carry out the repairs on the ground. American technicians upgrade the targeting software and other classified technology….The pilot likely has been trained by the United States Air Force….American military officials…provide intelligence and tactical advice….

American fingerprints are all over the air war in Yemen, where…strikes by the Saudi-led coalition have killed more than 4,600 civilians….Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman…relies on American support to keep his warplanes in the air. At least 60,000 Yemenis have died in the war, and the country stands on the brink of a calamitous famine.

…President Obama gave the war his qualified approval…[and] President Trump embraced Prince Mohammed and bragged of multibillion-dollar arms deals with the Saudis. As bombs fell on Yemen….in 2017, the United States military announced a $750 million program focused on how to carry out airstrikes….Congress authorized…more than $510 million in precision-guided munitions to Saudi Arabia….

The civilian toll is still rising….November was the most violent month in Yemen since January 2016….The coalition routinely ignored a no-strike list….of hospitals, schools and other places where civilians normally gathered….

…Hundreds of American aviation mechanics…keep the F-15 fleet in the air. In 2017, Boeing signed a $480 million contract for service repairs to the fleet.

Indigenous youth face vicious U.S. racism

NYT, 12/29–Native students at Wolf Point [school] and across the United States…post some of the worst academic outcomes….exacerbated by decades of discrimination….

…Negative outcomes [include]…suicide…. Among people aged 18 to 24, Native have the highest rate of suicide in the nation….

…Their education [is]…in a "state of emergency…." Native students are more than twice as likely to be suspended [than white students]….

In Wolf Point…white students are more than 10 times as likely to take at least one advanced placement class as their Native peers…."The discrimination is so ingrained that people think that's just the way things are…." The…schools…shunt struggling Native students into a poorly funded, understaffed program…often against their will.

On the school's basketball court, a coach has used derogatory slurs such as "prairie Indians" and "dirty Indians" in front of Native students….A Wolf Point junior took his own life after being berated by the principle for poor attendance….

"The district not only demonstrates indifference to but actually inflames Native students' vulnerability to self-harm…."

…In the…Elementary School District in Northern California….the school's principal called Native students a "pack of wolves…."

"The federal government created a policy to culturally annihilate us," said the director of…an advocacy organization….In the eighth and ninth grade, Ms. [Ruth] Fourstar was hospitalized four times for post-traumatic stress….Her grades plummeted…after being high enough to earn her a spot on the honor roll…. "Broken promises –that's all you get from school." Ms. Fourstar said….Much as white authorities suppressed Native culture for generations, the schools hinder Native students from succeeding and forming the next generation of tribal leadership….

"History is repeating itself," [educator Angela Cheek said].

Capitalist medicine: inequality with 'Chinese Characteristics'





British surgeon Dr. Joshua Horn's epic 1970 book about practicing medicine in revolutionary China, *Away With All Pests*, inspired young doctors around the world with a vision. Communist-led workers in China built the most egalitarian health system that had ever existed, out of the combined ruination of British imperialism, brutal Japanese occupation, and World War II.

In revolutionary China, doctors, nurses, orderlies and ambulatory patients all participated in "rounds," visiting each patient. Then they discussed, evaluated and criticized the medical plans put forward by the senior physician. The society that Horn described was probably as difficult for workers outside China to picture then, as it is now.

Capitalist healthcare: poverty or death

Fast forward 50 years, and that scene has become unimaginable even in China. China may have hundreds of new, modern hospitals with all the latest equipment. But the system is now so infected by inequality, mistrust and frustration that patients and their families physically attack medical staff thousands of times every year, sometimes fatally.

One afternoon recently, a visibly frightened and upset Mr. Zhang (not his real name) came to the newborn intensive care unit of a large urban hospital. His newborn son developed severe breathing problems shortly after birth. An ambulance had rushed him to a specialty hospital, where the doctors painted a grim picture for Mr. Zhang. They were already using their most powerful respirator machine and strongest medications, but his son continued to worsen. The doctors proposed putting him on an artificial lung machine for a few days, so his lungs could recover.

This same technique would have been recommended in any other advanced hospital in Japan, Europe or the U.S., and is now also available in the most advanced hospitals in China. Sadly the technique was not covered by health insurance. Mr. Zhang faced a choice: risk losing his son, or the entire family's savings, and perhaps their home. After consulting with his wife, Mr. Zhang shook his head: "We can't afford it."

China's murderous capitalist reversal

Such choices are increasingly common. Researchers at the Children's Hospital of Fudan University in Shanghai reported results from 55 newborn units across China in Pediatrics, a leading North American medical journal, in 2012. Most of these babies died after withdrawal of intensive care. The authors reported that "46.2 percent of the deaths from withdrawal of support,resulted from the parents' inability to afford the high cost of continued medical treatment."

A study of the huge backlog in essential surgeries in China showed similar problem. One example: In June 2015, doctors told 69-year-old Shuai Shuiqing she had stomach cancer and would need surgery. She left her home in the city of Chongzhou in Szechuan province, and traveled 20 miles to visit Chengdu's Huaxi Hospital, which is ranked second best in all of China. Then she waited six weeks to see a surgeon. By then she had gone into shock; the cancer had metastasized to other organs, and she died soon after(China File, 11/30/18).

'To get rich is criminal'

The study found China's medical system prevents surgeons from operating until they are mid-career, age 40 or older, to guarantee that the senior surgeons stay busy to maximize their incomes. This system evolved over the past decades as the medical care system was allowed to develop according to market forces. This has been the ideology of the Chinese "Communist" Party since the 1970s.

A visitor to China recently asked, "With a virtually unlimited supply of capable people and massive amounts of money, China could have set up a health care system like any rich country in the world. Instead they modeled their system on the United States, which has the highest infant mortality rate and the shortest life expectancy of all [industrialized] countries. Why?"

Simply, today's Chinese medical system is not designed to "serve the people." It is designed to stimulate economic growth, just like healthcare in the U.S. does. The health sector is one of the largest contributors to GDP growth in China, and since GDP is a capitalist criterion of "growth," rather than improved population health, there is no question that the system works–for capitalists.

Best health insurance is communist revolution

Every dramatic success in population health in China followed China's violent communist-led revolution. Kimberly Babiarz and her group of Stanford researchers stated, in a 2014 study: "From 1950 to 1980, China experienced the most rapid sustained increase in life expectancy of any population in documented global history."

Capitalism's apologists, inside and outside China, distort history and credit socialism's reversal to capitalism whenever referring to improved health in China. But facts are stubborn things. In the 25 years of socialism from 1950 to 1975, life expectancy increased 25 years (from 40 to 65). In the 35 years after capitalist restoration, life expectancy only increased 8 years; from 65 to 73.

Communists support modern healthcare technology. However, politics are primary over technology or technique in determining a population's health. Fancy new hospitals under capitalism only ensure the rich get life-saving treatment; outcomes for workers like Mr. Zhang and Ms. Shaui tend to be disastrous.

China's bosses today push "growth" above all. They plan to replace the United States as the leading imperialist power in the world. The competition between the imperialist bosses in these two powerful countries will end in yet another world war to determine which capitalists get to exploit the world's workers.

But communists have transformed world wars into revolutions before, and will again. As Progressive Labor Party (PLP) has analyzed elsewhere, for all the achievements of socialist societies in the Soviet Union and China, they never abolished money, inequality, or borders–key features of capitalism that enabled their reversal. The communist society we create after revolution will never allow profits and inequality in any form to develop in healthcare, or society—ever again.✪